THE EYE:

BY OBADIAH OPTIC.

——*VARIOUS OBJECTS FROM THE SENSE,*
VARIOUSLY REPRESENTING. MILTON.

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Nam genus, et proavos et quæ non fecimus ipsi,
Vix ea nostra voco. OVID.

The things achieved by my forefathers I call
——————— not mine ———————

BEFORE I proceed with the history of our family, I crave the indulgence of my readers, for a few moments, to notice my very friendly correspondents.

'*Friend Ephraim*,' whom at first glance I recognized to be a near relation, advises well; such friends ought always to be entertained with cordial affection: If at any time I chance to overlook what I ought to have examined, I trust that he who appears to be an "Israelite indeed," will immediately inform me of it, that so my eye may be purged from the film of prejudice, and freed from the mist of delusion. My other correspondents, '*The American Idler*,' and '*Spectacles*,' appear well, their favours are prized; but, as we are just set out on our journey, I trust we will be, in a short time, better acquainted.

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LOOKING over the history of mankind, with an enquiring eye, I have often been astonished, not only at the readiness with which man is wont to blame his fellow, but with what keenness he charges the failings of an individual to a whole family, sect, or society; even the Christian religion, which, for the purity of its moral precepts, the sublimity of its doctrines, and the excellency of its promised rewards, infinitely surpasses all that ever was promulged by the most enlightened sages, has been vilified because of the slips of some of its professors, and their crimes charged to its account.—In like manner has

our family suffered. *Zebedee Foresight*, who sprung from one of our most venerable patriarchs, by what means I could never discover, was inflated with the most absurd notions; he fancied he had a constant communication with spirits, marked out his lucky and unlucky days, and regulated all his actions in the most fantastical manner; I have sometimes been highly diverted seeing him setting his room in order with the utmost exactness, and on enquiring if he expected company? with the utmost gravity he would reply, O yes, I am this evening to have the pleasure of a visit from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: Yet my uncle was not mad, far from it: If he walked in the fields, he met spirits at almost every turn; in the city he was constantly informing you, there goes a funeral, I foresee it, from that house:—Ah, yonder is a merry party, I see the bride-favours—yes, yes, that will be a sorrowful affair—What?—O never mind, he would reply. An accident—but no power can prevent it. Once I remember, when a boy, I was walking in the fields, he caught me up in his arms and ran to a considerable distance;—it was providential, nephew, quoth he, that I was present, a dozen coaches would have ran over you, had I not snatched you from danger:—I saw none, uncle,—you, foolish child, ah no, but I *foresaw* it.

My own sister *Sarah*, as good a quiet, humane woman, as I (partially aside) ever knew, tho' she does not pretend to communications with spirits, is constantly foreseeing letters in the candles, strangers in the fire, or cross accidents from table-slips—the dead bell rings in her ear; the death watch is in the bed-posts; death in the cracking of the furniture, the crowing of the cock, and the howling of the dog: She has also, as well as uncle *Zebedee*, her unlucky days, her favourable times of the moon; and, with all my art, I have not been able to reason her out of the belief of witches; for, when I really think many times I have gotten a complete victory, she comes slap dash in my teeth with the witch of Endor, and "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;" this generally ends the dispute; for, as she never makes use of these until she can reason no longer; so, against them she will hear no argument:—I therefore quietly knock the ashes out of my pipe, fill it anew, and resign myself to rest in my elbow chair.

Thus our family has very often suffered in their reputation. *Foresecers, fortune-tellers, second-sight-men, pretenders to prophesy, visionaries*, and a great body of *prognosticators*, undoubtedly have sprung from the OPTICS, for perfection does not

belong to us; and these ought justly to be blamed for their fanciful opinions, and mankind advised against such errors. But the OPTICS ought by no means to be criminated for the follies of a few individuals. Error in practice is easily detected; but in opinion, let it be ever so absurd, it belongs not to man to convince: We may, it is true, silence our opponent, but still the opinion remains. He only who made man, can cause the arrows of conviction to reach his heart. Often have I said to my sister *Sarah*, Whence can dogs, cocks, and bed-post-worms have the intelligence of a death?—The Author of wisdom always chuses the best means to produce the best effects—Dost thou think, sister, that cocks, dogs, post-worms, and cracking of furniture are the best means of conveying information?—His lessons are all so plain, that "he who runs may read"—Are these so plain? Brother, she always answers, I cannot reason with you who have been college-bred, but I can hold my own opinion: Did not the black cock crow three times the night before we heard of the death of uncle *Amos?* Did not the dog howl every night for a week before the death of cousin *Dorothea*.—Did not I myself hear the death watch? And three strokes on the great dinging table were heard by us all, before the loss of your nephew *Elihu*. Brother, brother, you cannot convince *me*.—As there is no answering these appeals, tho' contrary to both natural and revealed religion, I dismiss them as I do the witch of Endor, by composing myself in my easy chair. OBADIAH OPTIC.

ORIGINAL.

THE AMERICAN IDLER.—No. III.

Oh woman, lovely woman, nature form'd thee
To temper man: We had been brutes without you. OTWAY.

THE powers of the female mind, have long been a subject of speculative controversy. Ingenuity has marshalled her forces in the contest, arming the illiberal with many weapons, in order, if possible, to extirpate from the female character every thing that is either noble or dignified. Opinions that have grown out of heathen superstition; ideas that were emitted from those clouds of intellectual darkness which enveloped the human mind in past ages, appear to be tolerated, in some degree, in *this*, which boasts of being irradiated, with

the constellated lustre of religion and learning. It was a favourite maxim of the deluded followers of Mahomet, that "*Women possessed no souls.*" Estimated only as an inferiour order of beings, they were made the objects of unsanctified indignity; and not unlike the miserable "*help mate*" of the aborigines of our own country, she was compelled to toil as the beast of the field, or found employed, as in days of old, "*hewing wood and drawing water.*"

The indignation excited toward the authors of such barbarity is just; the current of feeling hurries with it in its impetuous course, the mingled sensations of pity and contempt. But whilst we indulge in this resentment, we ought to reflect and consider, and weigh our own conduct toward the fairest portion of the rational creation, lest, without being conscious of it, we may be pursuing a path equally preposterous with that of the Mahometans, and infinitely more censurable.

That the female mind is as strong, and capable of as great improvement as that of man, I hesitate not to declare; nor is this a rash assertion. We are told, that CORNELIA, wife of SCIPIO AFRICANUS, was a woman of the most enlightened understanding, she not only studied, but was mistress of philosophy, and gave public lectures at Rome. CORRINNA, a Grecian poetess, who lived in the time of PINDAR, was called the lyric muse, for her excellence in that style of composition, and is said to have five times wrested the prize from that illustrious bard: ELIZABETH, *queen of England*, daughter of HENRY VIII. was renowned for her profound erudition; her subjects honoured her for her talents, and loved her for the magnanimity and wisdom of her administration: *Lady* JANE GRAY, was justly called the admiration of the age in which she lived: At an early period, she was mistress of the Latin and Greek, was able to converse in the Arabic and Chaldee languages, and those of French and Italian were as familiar as her own: *Lady* MONTAGUE was celebrated for her comprehensive understanding, lively imagination and brilliant wit: And who does not admire the piety and humility which were displayed in the character of *Lady* GUYON? the productions of her pen are a monument of her excellence. Indeed, the names of SMITH and ROWE, of MORE and WAKEFIELD, with numerous other distinguished females, who have added lustre to polite literature and science in Europe, shall long be dear to learning. And talents equally splendid exist in our own country, which are yet to receive the same homage of deserved praise.

Let us not then value woman exclusively for her external beauties and unmeaning accomplishments, no longer degrade ourselves by degrading her with the *prattle of sounds* and "*pompous nothings*"—no longer believe that she is a mere automaton, possessing the power of motion, or like the cronomater, regulated at pleasure: These things custom has too long sanctioned;—it becomes *us* to endeavour to limit, if not entirely to remove the pernicious influence. We are justly reprobated for under-rating female talents; let us then resolve to believe that their powers of mind are equal with our own; let us no more be employed in giving any false and trifling directions to them; let us cherish every inclination that we may discover in them to attain the heights of science, or to partake at the feast of literature; let us review their opinions with attention and respect, and listen to their enquiries with patience and with pleasure. Thus shall we alike fulfil the high demand of *reason*, and perform the most exalted of duties, the obligation of affection. R.

ORIGINAL.

THE SPECTACLES.—No. III.

Omne in præcipiti vitium stetit. JUV.
Vice has attained its *zenith*. GIFFORD.

WHEN we calmly survey the manners of this world, we are surprised that men should be so careless of their own welfare, and so willing to be the dupes of others; resolutely bent on the attainment of favourite objects, their own happiness dwindles into a despicable incumbrance, and is trampled upon as an unmeaning obstacle to their wishes—those who point out their errors are treated with little respect, and the attempt to persuade them into a proper course of life, generally proves fruitless: It has employed the talents and industry of many eminent characters to reform a single individual, while a favourite taylor or millener leads the fashions of the city, and thousands follow the whims of a single person, and endeavour to imitate the vices of notorious rakes. Every new writer, in a cause so much against the inclinations of men, is considered as an intruder; and however unjustifiable the imputation, he is regarded as one who vainly aspires to execute what the greatest ta-

lents have failed in. The Rambler has ingeniously and correctly drawn the impending fate of such who wish to lead others to stem the current of vice and fashion, "There are few enterprizes," says the author "so hopeless as contests with the fashion, in which the opponents are not only made confident by their numbers, and strong by their union, but are hardened by contempt of their antagonist, whom they always look upon as a wretch of low notions, contracted views, mean conversation, and narrow fortune, who envies the elevations which he cannot reach, who would gladly embitter the happiness which his inelegance or indigence denies him to partake, and who has no other end in his advice than to revenge his own mortification, by hindering those whom birth and taste have set above him, from the enjoyment of their superiority, and bringing them down to a level with himself." Altho' this discouraging view is given by one who well understood the human mind, still the prejudices of these persons may not be so strong as to preclude all hope of reformation.

Truth wants no argument, is an adage as correct as trite, but we want the means of enforcing it; the remedy is plain, but the mode of application is not attended to. Many have endeavoured to reform the votaries of fashion, by heaping scurrility upon their weakness: Instead of treating with them as rational creatures, and entitled to respectful communication, they have commenced their exhortations with scoffing at the faculties of their opponents, as enervated by the vices of the age, and their judgments as impaired by intemperance; but their advice has been consigned to an early tomb of oblivion, and they have been indeed considered as 'wretches of low notions.'

There is another, and not a rare fault, of which many censors are guilty; an eager thirst for fame is the sole inducement to their taking an active part; they wish themselves, rather than the goodness of their cause, should be considered as accomplishing the task they undertake; they seem careless whether their proposed object is gained, if the success cannot be attributed to their ingenuity; they search their imaginations for original arguments, and prefer them to the more cogent reasons of more eminent characters; they care not what is advanced, if it can appear in harmonious periods, and 'learned words.' These can expect nothing less than the contemptuous censure of those they wish to condemn, while such ridiculous vanity is blended with their seeming desire of doing good.

There are others, who satisfy themselves with tamely suggesting the probable tendency, rather than proving the positive consequences of vicious habits; and these, though they may meet with some attention, yet their partial representations answer no good purpose.

It is difficult to arrest the attention of the reader on topics of this kind, unless clothed with considerable humour, or written in a superiour style; as the *matter* is not acceptable, there must be something extraordinary in the *manner*, in order to insure a tolerable reception—there is every thing to preponderate against the merits of the writer; the fangs of criticism and prejudice are always prepared to mangle those who wish to thwart their favourite inclinations, but

"*Ten* censure wrong, for *one* who writes amiss,"

with this consolation, I shall go on to notice the several follies which prevail among mankind, and in attempting to vindicate nature and propriety, be careful to avoid the erroneous paths marked out by many of my predecessors. T.

ORIGINAL.

MUSHROOM.—No. I.

I HAD thrown the stump of my second segar into the fire, turned myself in my arm chair, and had my finger on the bell-wire to wring for my slippers, when a loud rap at the door startled me—It was past nine o'clock—who could it be—it was certainly a message from a patient—but ere I could find time to congratulate myself on the prospect of a fee, my old house-keeper Deborah, to whom I had given strict orders never to wait for the *second* rap, gave me a packet—I knew the hand—'twas from the old apothecary over the way, and read as follows—

DEAR FUNGUS,

ENCLOSED you have the first number of "*the Eye*"—'twont do—must fall—no support in this place—men of genius no leisure—men of leisure no genius.— Your's,

CAUSTIC.

Yes but it will—no men of leisure indeed! I am one with leisure enough on my hands, said I, laying aside my hopes of

a fee and my gold headed cane at the same time—I am a man of leisure, and I am sure there must be many men of leisure, and genius too, in this populous city—I will throw in my mite, said I, settling myself in my arm chair—if the brass plate on my door with DR. FUNGUS in large letters will not bring me into notice, my pen shall—while I am without patients, MR. OPTIC shall have an occasional communication, while he has patience to publish them—who knows the celebrity I may gain—patients plenty—my one horse chaise——It is impossible to say how long my golden dream would have lasted, had not Deborah broke the charm with "your slippers sir," touching me on the elbow—true, Deborah, said I, it is almost bed time—past 11 o'clock said the watchman. FUNGUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EYE.

MR. OPTIC,

HAVING early accustomed myself to observe human nature, I frequently indulge in throwing my "mind's eye" over "this scene of man," to reflect on his virtues and his foibles.

That proneness of the human mind to disengage itself from the present, to expatiate in the boundless regions of futurity, has often been said to be the chief source of human happiness.

It is certain, that many of the "sweet moments" of life are derived from an indulgence in hope; and man were indeed a "world without a sun," had he not that benign principle implanted in his breast. It is pleasing to look forward through time for those joys we at present wish; and if we cannot enjoy the reality, we do at least its shadow.

But though it is acknowledged, that many of the pleasures of life arise from hope reasonably indulged in; yet it is also certain, that many of the evils of life arise from those wild extravagances of unreasonable expectation, in which some are pleased to doze away their existence.

Disappointments are calculated to wring the soul; and he who expects much will meet with many disappointments: Hence, Dean Swift has given us this mock beatitude, "Blessed is he that expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed." But, independent of the stings of disappointment, there are many other considerations which should induce us not to

be too much excursive on the wings of visionary hope. When the mind once grows fond

"——————to linger to survey
The promis'd joys of life's unmeasur'd way,"

we are too apt to spend those moments which ought to be employed in the more important concerns of life, in forming airy projects of future joy and greatness. Life is too short and precarious to be spent dreaming awake; yet many neglect their interests, desert their cares and duties to dream away their lives in vacant hope. Punctuality in our engagements is certainly of the first importance; but it is as certain, that he who has his mind continually employed in building airy castles, cannot observe a strict and just punctuality in his business.

In viewing human nature, it would seem as if the waywardness of will, was ever opposed to the steadfastness of nature; the young would be old, and the old would be young: One wishes the sun would move slower, that he might prolong present joys; another that it would move faster, that he might grasp the pleasure he has in sight. We are never satisfied with our present condition; every new acquisition generates new desires. We see and pursue, but cannot enjoy; but follow the gay phantom pointed out by hope, till we arrive at the sea shore of eternity, where it is still before us.

Man is indeed a strange and inconsistent being! With continual memento to impress upon his mind the transitory and precarious nature of human life, the rapid flight of time, and the extent and variety of his duties, he suffers hour after hour, day after day and week after week to pass away, with as much listlessness as if life were indeed a jest. Even his ardent love of fame, his ambition to be great, is not a permanent restraint upon the giddy thoughtlessness of his nature. Often, very often, does he step aside from the elevated and dignified pursuits of honourable ambition, to follow, like a child, the butterfly that flits before his sight.

J. E.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"*Hymns*" by "*Alexander*" shall be inserted occasionally.

"*The Eye, an irregular Ode*" — shall have possession of our poetical department next week, a repetition of such favours from *Anacharsis* will be cordially received.

Several communications are under consideration.

Poetical Department.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EYE.

MR. OPTIC,

I HAND you a few Hymns for a place [illegible] our paper, if they shall be found worthy of that honour. You [illegible] some allusions, readily perceive that they were occasional; c[illegible] when the mind was affected by particular subjects, or under[illegible] particularly strong; dictated by the impulse of the feelin[illegible]ne; and, not being intended for the public eye, are inartificial [illegible]tracture. If however, they shall afford the smallest gratification t[illegible] one truly pious mind, I shall not feel much solicitude about the decision of criticism: The good qualities of the heart are always preferable to the elegant furniture of the head.

A.

HYMN ON SUNDAY MORNING.

"My voice in the *morning* thou shalt hear, O LORD! in the *morning* I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. PSALM v. 3.

ALMIGHTY GOD! enthron'd above,
Fountain of mercy, truth and love,
Abash'd before thine awful face,
I wou'd adore and offer praise.

But what can abject mortals give
Worthy their MAKER to receive?
Yes!—Thou wilt hear if man impart
The homage of a grateful heart:

Yes! Thou wilt hear, and then receive
The smallest tribute that we give,
For HIS dear sake who pleads our cause;
Who nail'd our frailties to HIS cross;

Who bore our sins upon the wood;
Who cleans'd us with his precious blood;
Who on thy sov'reign altar lays
The incense of our pray'rs and praise.

On this blest morning of thy day,
Devoutly let me kneel and pray;
Devoutly let my voice ascend
To thee, my GOD, my life, my friend.

Thrice welcome, glorious day! that brings
A rest from work and worldly things,
And the sweet privilege to prove
Communion with the GOD of love.

How my rapt soul is all on fire,
And mounts on wings of strong desire,
To catch, from angels angel-praise
To animate my feeble lays!

How great thy wond'rous pow'r and might
That spoke the universe to light!
Thy providential care divine,
That still upholds the vast machine!

How wisely, when creation stood
Complete, and thou pronounc'd it good,
This day, in kindness, was impress
On man, a day of sacred rest!

But O! more wond'rous great thy love
That brought salvation from above;
And, on this day, subdu'd our foes,
When CHRIST from death triumphant rose!

Hell and the grave oppose in vain;—
He bursts their bars;—He breaks our chain;—
In glory re-ascends on high,
And points his followers to the sky.

The host of heav'n around him throng,
Shouting his vict'ry in their song;
And welcome his return above,
Fountain of mercy, truth and love.

Hence should this day forever be
To all mankind a jubilee;
The day when pure devotion ought
To prompt each action, word and thought.

Yet, not that jubilee of noise,
Which sounds the world's tumultuous joys;
But spent in heav'n's appointed ways,
Of pray'r, and gratitude, and praise.

These are thy precepts, dearest LORD!
That breathe throughout thy holy word;
That, in affection, speak benign,
And prove its origin divine.

O heavenly Father! long as I
Am exil'd from my native sky,
An orphan in this world of woe,
To this thy will I'll frequent go;

There shall I see thy gracious face;
There thy lov'd lineaments I'll trace;
And there, with fix'd attention stay
To read and ponder, sing and pray.

By it instructed, I shall see
My duty to mankind and thee;
And by its quick'ning spirit feel
Obedience sweet and grateful zeal.

Thus shall my number'd days be blest—
But this a day of special rest,
When my abstracted soul shall prove
Communion with the GOD of love.

And, when thy voice, O parent dear,
Call, me from earth and all things here,
With joy I'll cry, "to thee I come,
To rest in my eternal home." ALCANDER.

ORIGINAL.

CONNUBIAL JOYS.

A SONNET.

TO man what are the joys of life,
Tho' fleeting pleasures charms display,
And fortune's sun-shine gilds his day,
Unless he shares them with a wife?

No soft content his mind can prove,
No tender bliss to him is known;
No smile reflective of his love,
No bosom friend he calls his own.

When anxious cares the soul oppress,
A wife's endearments make them less;
Her smiles dispel the clouds of grief,
And give the sad'ning mind relief.

Then may each virtuous heart the joys approve,
Which spring incessant from connubial love. ALICIAN.

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